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RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 0089  
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA PRIORITY 0079  
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY 0203  
RUEHLGB/AMEMBASSY KIGALI PRIORITY 0059  
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SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

AF/C FOR SSARDAR, MASHRAF, SLOPEZ, KWYCOFF; PARIS FOR GDELIA,  
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LONDON FOR PLORD; YAOUNDE FOR POL/ECON  
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SUBJECT: CAR NATIONAL DIALOGUE - POSITIVE FINALE, BUT WAITING FOR THE  
NEW GOVERNMENT ...

REF: BANGUI 250

¶1. (U) The CAR's National Dialogue ended in a seven-hour closing ceremony on Saturday, December 20, that brought speeches by President Bozize, former President Ange Felix Patasse, and Dialogue mediator and former Burundian President Pierre Buyoya. Finishing on a positive note as well as on schedule, President Bozize promised the implementation of the Dialogue's recommendations in his speech, and former President Patasse lauded his successor's leadership as well as, surprisingly, accepted publicly the International Criminal Court's ongoing investigation into 2002-2003 war crimes in the CAR. The ceremony also included a recitation of the recommendations of the Dialogue's three committees (See Reftel).

¶2. (U) Former President Patasse called current President Bozize his 'little brother' during his speech, in a gesture widely viewed as both conciliatory and sincere, and President Bozize accompanied his older successor whom he deposed in a 2003 coup back to his chair after embracing him. Dialogue Mediator Buyoya expressed satisfaction with the results of the 12-day long affair, but noted that the Dialogue's recommendations should be implemented so that the Dialogue 'acts as a trampoline to bring the country out of its past,' to bring a nationwide peace, and to allow all parts of society to work together to develop the country.

¶3. (SBU) In a hopeful first step, President Bozize gave December 23 as the date in which he would announce the new, power-sharing government. This government promises to include members from all seven (7) of the opposing groups which took part in the Dialogue: the rebel groups APRD led by Jean-Jacques Demafouth, MLCJ led by Abakar Sabone, UFDR led by Daman Zacharia, FDPC led by Abdoulaye Miskine, UFR led by Florian Ndjadder as well as the opposition groups UFN led by Henri Pouzere and the more powerful MLPC led by Martin Ziguele. NOTE: The rebel groups are

not / not all equal in force or political influence, with the APRD, the UFDR, and probably the FDPC being the only groups with known soldiers in the field in the NW and NE provinces. Among the political opposition, Pouzere has led the opposition UFVN coalition credibly over the last year, though Ziguele is considered more popular and a better rival to Bozize for the 2010 Presidential election. END NOTE.

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT: The end of the Dialogue brings another sign of hope, as well as continued tension to the Central African political scene. The President's upcoming announcement of a power-sharing / coalition government is positive news, but everything depends on whom he chooses as his Ministers. Leaving key ministries such as Mines, Interior, Justice, and Water and Forests in the hands of his family and close supporters, while giving the more inconsequential Ministries of Sport, Tourism, Urbanism, etc. to rebel and opposition leaders may not be enough to end finally the rebellions in the north and the opposition in the capital. (In particular, many rumors in Bangui report that the President plans to move his confidant and the notoriously corrupt Minister of Mines Sylvain Ndoutingai from Mines to the Interior portfolio, just in time to oversee the 2010 elections. This would not / not be a sign of trust and good faith.) Similarly, choosing the least powerful and most dubious of rebel leaders such as Abakar Sabone to include in the government may not bring any confidence from the APRD rebels in the northwest provinces, if they are excluded. That said, many Central African observers judged Bozize's tenor during the dialogue as both sincere and vigorous, and he may yet surprise observers and appoint a true cross-section of the political opposition, rebel leaders, and his own Kwa Na Kwa Presidential majority.

¶5. (SBU) No matter the composition of the government, the GoCAR

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deserves significant credit for a National Dialogue that was a) on schedule, b) productive in creating a slate of credible improvements to be implemented, c) relatively harmonious and civil despite the depth of the political divisions, and d) surprisingly inclusive of all of the major parties to the country's various conflicts. While the GoCAR had demonstrated not a small amount of reticence and occasional intransigence in the year-long negotiations for the Dialogue, they ultimately passed a global amnesty to allow indicted former President Patasse and former Defense Minister Demafouth to return to the country, and allowed BONUCA and the international community to organize without interference and with occasional government support. That said, the GoCAR did not implement the recommendations of the previous 2004 Dialogue, and would have to go back on some of its policy to implement the results of this Dialogue, i.e. the Magistrate's reform law and provisions to the electoral code. Despite the flash and pomp of the Dialogue ceremony, real progress will lie in the difficult compromises of a power-sharing government as well as the slow efforts of implementing the recommendations of this forum. END COMMENT  
NEARY ##